

# Clark, Lincoln and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development EIS

Bureau of Land Management

Newsletter #2, November 2007

## SNWA UPDATES PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

In July, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) submitted to BLM an updated Plan of Development for the Groundwater Project. The project would convey up to 200,000 acre feet of water per year (afy) from six hydrographic basins. SNWA would develop approximately 167,000 afy and the remaining capacity would be reserved for waters to be developed by Lincoln County Water District.

In addition to several small changes, the new plan identifies 14 well sites in Spring Valley, a 17-mile northern extension of the Snake Valley lateral, and a five-mile reduction of the Spring Valley lateral. The current configuration of the project is shown on the map. All of the project components are:

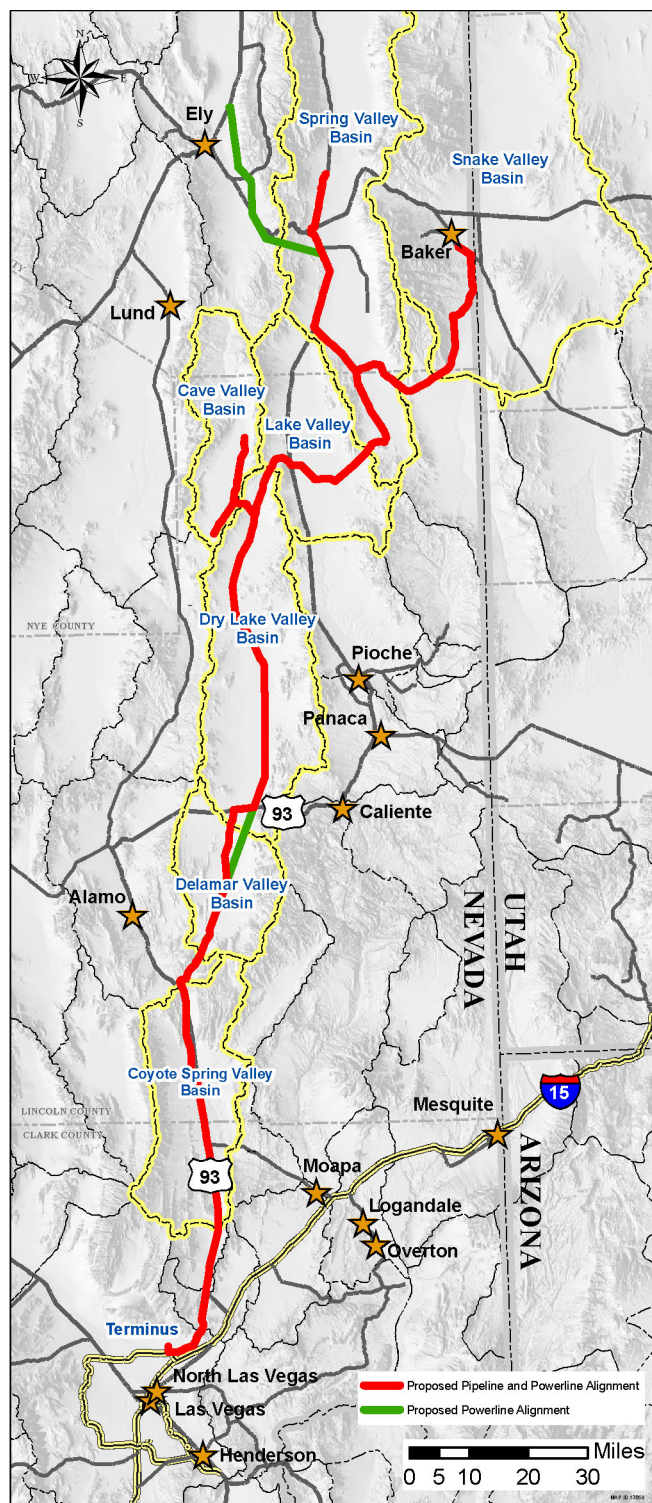
- 328 miles of buried pipelines
- 5 pumping stations
- 6 regulating tanks
- One 40 million-gallon buried storage reservoir
- One water treatment facility
- 14 production well sites
- 349 miles of power lines
- 8 electrical substations
- 4 hydroturbine energy recovery facilities

## EIS ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives are currently being formulated based on the scoping process and cooperating agency input.

Alternatives categories we have identified are:

- Proposed Action
- Reduced Pumping
- Alternative Alignments/Facility Locations
- Water Conservation/Demand Management in Las Vegas
- Diversion of Conserved Water from Nevada Irrigated Farmlands
- Colorado River System Water Supplies and Water Management
- Water Purchase from Large Regional Water Supply (non-Colorado River)
- No Action



National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) PROCESS		Conduct scoping & identify issues Published Scoping Report January 2007	Collect inventory data, formulate alternatives	Prepare analysis	Select preferred alternative; issue draft EIS Scheduled for fall 2008	Comment period on draft EIS; respond to comments
OTHER EIS ACTIVITIES  <b>Tribal Consultation:</b> Project briefings and government to government consultation meetings have begun with several tribes. BLM will continue its outreach throughout the life of the project.  <b>Hydrology:</b> The hydrology team is completing the data collection process, identifying and filling in data gaps, and preparing the data analysis, including a conceptual water model and a flow model.  <b>Natural Resources:</b> The natural resource team is completing the data collection process, identifying and filling in data gaps, and preparing a summary of the data analysis.  <b>Socioeconomics:</b> BLM and the cooperating agencies are identifying and setting up interviews with government officials, community leaders and affected parties.			COOPERATING AGENCIES  Nevada Department of Wildlife Nevada’s White Pine, Lincoln, and Clark counties Central Nevada Regional Water Authority State of Utah Utah’s Millard and Juab counties U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs U.S. Bureau of Reclamation U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Nellis Air Force Base National Park Service U.S. Forest Service			Issue final EIS Scheduled for spring 2009
						30-day review period
						Sign Record of Decision to approve EIS
						BLM Groundwater Projects Office phone: 775-861-6681 fax: 775-861-6689 email: nvgwprojects@blm.gov
WATER RIGHTS						
<b>Next Water Rights Hearing:</b> The hearing for SNWA applications in Cave, Dry Lake, and Delamar valleys is scheduled for February 4-15, 2008.  <b>Spring Valley Stipulated Agreement:</b> The Department of the Interior (DOI), through several bureaus, protested the SNWA water rights applications in Spring Valley, but withdrew their protest after completing a Stipulated Agreement with SNWA. The Stipulated Agreement establishes a process to develop and implement a monitoring, mitigation, and management plan. The Agreement corresponds only to the Spring Valley water rights applications. The work required by the agreement is separate from the BLM Groundwater Projects Office, whose mission is to complete the EIS; however, completed plans developed under the agreement will be presented under the proposed action of the EIS.  <b>Spring Valley Ruling:</b> On April 16, 2007 the Nevada State Engineer signed the SNWA Spring Valley Ruling (Ruling #5726). SNWA can pump a maximum of 40,000			acre-feet-per-year (afy) for 10 years. The State Engineer may grant an additional 20,000 afy based on the results of the 10-year pumping data and monitoring program. The BLM is not responsible for the administration of water rights and has no jurisdiction in these matters. To learn more about Nevada State Water Law, the Spring Valley Hearings, or to view the full ruling, please visit the Nevada State Engineer website at <a href="http://water.nv.gov/">http://water.nv.gov/</a> .  <b>Update on SNWA Data Collection:</b> SNWA is drilling testing and monitoring wells in Spring and Cave Valleys to collect data for the project. These wells are not production wells; production wells will be analyzed in the EIS and future NEPA documents. SNWA has applied to install additional monitoring wells, weather stations, piezometers, and permanent stream gauges. SNWA has submitted a right-of-way application to the BLM for each of these activities, and each application must then be approved through the NEPA process before work can begin.			